

# State making it easier to go pro in Michigan

June 26, 2017



*Brendan Prebo*Dr. Rose B. Bellanca (second from left) joins Gov. Rick Snyder (center) on stage with (from left to right) Clare Brisson (Chippewa Valley Schools), Brian Whiston, Roger Curtis, Michael Brosseau (Brose), Lee Graham (IUOE 324), Barb Land (Square

## Governor applauds WCC professional trades programs

Auburn Hills, Mich. – Governor Rick Snyder and the Michigan Career Pathways Alliance unveiled a comprehensive series of actions and recommendations aimed at closing the talent gap by expanding and strengthening career technical education statewide.

“We all have an important role in making sure every student has the opportunity to explore multiple pathways to find a career that matches

their interests and goals,” Snyder said. “We call this effort the Michigan Career Pathways Alliance. We are bringing together economic developers, employers and educators, as well as K-12 districts and higher education institutions with union leaders and businesses.”

Washtenaw Community College President Dr. Rose B. Bellanca joined Gov. Rick Snyder on stage at the unveiling. In praising WCC, Snyder singled out the college’s mobility technician training programs, which he said are “the first in the country.”

“Skilled professionals will be required in multiple occupations and functions to implement new intelligent transportation systems,” said Bellanca. “From an economic development perspective, without the talent to compete in this new industry, Michigan will not be able to attract business to locate and expand here. The inability to develop the workforce of the future driven by technology would be devastating and would result in the loss of business, jobs and opportunity.”

The proposals unveiled today complement the Governor’s priorities from the 21st Century Education Commission report, including statewide use of competency-based learning, creating more career paths for teachers, increasing access to postsecondary education, and holding the right people accountable.

At Snyder’s direction, Talent and Economic Development Director Roger Curtis partnered with State Superintendent Brian Whiston to work with stakeholders and gather valuable feedback. They have discussed challenges and concerns surrounding career exploration and job readiness, and then built recommendations to help Michigan residents, educators and job providers.

States across the country are struggling to fill openings in the professional trades, and leading the nation in developing talent was a key recommendation of the report issued by Snyder’s Building the 21st Century Economy Commission last month.

“We need to change the perceptions of the professional trades so students, parents and others know about the outstanding opportunities that are out there as Michigan businesses grow and thrive,” Curtis

said. "But that's only part of the job. Once we've shattered stereotypes, we need to have a stronger system in place for students to determine the best pathway for them, then have access to the rigorous training to get them to the job they want – no matter where they live."

The commission report also included recommendations to make Michigan a world leader in talent. Many of these recommendations, including increased funding for high school and at-risk students, a focus on competency-based learning, and more access to postsecondary learning, were adopted by the state Legislature during the budget process.

Whiston on Monday signed a directive setting some of the actions in place immediately. Others are recommendations that would require legislative changes or would be the first steps in an important discussion about addressing long-term challenges.

"Every educator wants to see students reach their potential, and we're working to give them new tools to help," Whiston said. "Some of these changes present a different way of approaching these challenges, and we're looking to have Michigan lead the nation in developing talent at all levels. Career and college readiness is vitally important for our students, and for our communities and state as a whole."

The announcement was made at Brose North America, an automotive supplier that was a founding member of Gov. Snyder's Michigan Advanced Technician Training program and a sponsor of FIRST Robotics and SquareOne.